

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1690

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 780

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB PINT PO

SUBJ: LABOR POLITICS AND INTERSINDICAL

REF: LISBON 762

SUMMARY: SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INDICATE INTERSINDICAL'S DOMINANT POSITION IN LABOR CHALLENGED BY BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LABOR CONFEDERATION INTERSINDICAL CLEARLY ESTABLISHED AS CENTRAL LABOR ORGAN IN PORTUGAL WITH SUPPORT OF LEADERS OF MAJOR UNIONS AND ABILITY TO STAGE IMPRESSIVE STREET DEMONSTRATIONS. NOTEWORTHY THAT THERE IS, HOWEVER, SMALL BUT DISCERNIBLE TREND APPARENT FOR INCREASING CRITICISM OF INTERSINDICAL'S PRESUMPTION TO SPEAK FOR ALL PORTUGUESE WORKERS. THIS TREND SEEN AS RESULT OF INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS IN UNION AFFAIRS.

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2. ON ONE HAND INTERSINDICAL BEING ATTACKED FROM LEFT BY MRPP AND SIMILAR EXTREMIST GROUPS WHO FAVOR MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE BY HAVOR IN HASTENING DEMISE OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM. INTERSINDICAL ACCUSED AT MRPP RALLY AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT FEBRUARY 7 (REFTEL) OF SPONSORING CARNIVALS WHILE WORKERS FACE BASIC PROBLEMS. CRITICISM TOUCHED INTERSINDICAL ON SENSITIVE NERVE AND SCHEDULED INTER-SINDICAL SPONSORED CARNIVAL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.

3. ON OTHER FLANK INTERSINDICAL MEETING REACTION FROM WORKERS WHO, WHILE SUPPORTING LABOR UNITY, REJECT OUTRIGHT DOMINATION BY INTERSINDICAL. IN CASES WHERE UNION ELECTIONS ARE CONTESTED BY TWO OR MORE SLATES, POLITICAL ISSUES SOMETIMES BLURRED BY WORK-RELATED MATTERS AND INTERNAL FACTIONAL DIVISIONS.

4. MOST RECENT EXAMPLE OF ABOVE WAS ELECTION OF LISBON TELEPHONE WORKERS FEBRUARY 8. WINNING SLATE CLAIMED TO BE NON-PARTISAN AND ITS PLATFORM CONCENTRATED ON WORK-RELATED MATTERS. WHILE ALL THREE COMPETING SLATES SUPPORTED LABOR UNITY, EACH COUCHED SUPPORT IN TERMS THAT ISSUE WAS ONE ON WHICH WORKERS SHOULD MAKE DECISION.

COMMENT: SOME OF INTERSINDICAL'S STRENGTH RESTS ON SELF-APPOINTED LEADERS WHO ASSUMED CONTROL OF MANY UNIONS FOLLOWING APRIL 25 REVOLUTION. INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS IN UNION ACTIVITIES AND ELECTIONS MAY HAVE LONG-RUN EFFECT OF INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF WORK RELATED ISSUES AND REDUCING PRESENT EMPHASIS ON POLITICAL IDEOLOGY NOW PROMOTED BY INTERSINDICAL.
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